

COMMUNITY GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

Sponsored by
Duncannon Council of Churches
April 20, 1973 12:00-3:00 P.M.
Silent & Musical Meditation 11:50 A.M.
Arlene Rissinger & Betty Drinton
THEME: "THE SEVEN LAST WORDS"

Prelude

*The Invocation: Miss Dorothy Hamilton, Duncannon
United Methodist Church
*Responsive Reading No. 726 Luke 1:68-79
Hymn 163 'Tis Midnight; and on Olivé's Brow

I The Word of Forgiveness

The Lesson: Luke 23:32-38
The Meditation: Pastor Viggo Svendsen, Christ
Lutheran Church

The Prayer

*Hymn: No. 334 verses 1-4

Special by Arlene Rissinger, Duncannon Church of God

II The Word of Pardon

The Lesson: Luke 23:39-43
The Meditation: Pastor Harold Rockey, Duncannon
Presbyterian Church

The Prayer

*Hymn: No. 347 verses 1,3

III The Word of Concern

The Lesson: John 19:23-27
The Meditation: Pastor Paul Parrish, Duncannon
Assembly of God Church

The Prayer

*The Hymn: No. 312 verses 1,2

Special by William Kelly, Otterbien United Methodist
Church

IV The Word of Loneliness

The Lesson: Mark 15:29-34
The Meditation: Pastor Ralph Link, Duncannon
United Church of Christ

The Prayer

*The Hymn: No. 417 verses 1-4

Special by Rev. & Mrs. Simon Lehman, Roseglon Brethren
in Christ Church

V The Word of Suffering

The Lesson: John 19:28-29
The Meditation: Pastor Simon Lehman, Roseglon
Brethren in Christ

The Prayer

*The Hymn: No. 180 verses 1,3

VI The Word of Victory

The Lesson: John 19:30
The Meditation: Pastor Bruce Gearhart, Duncannon
United Methodist Parrish

The Prayer

*The Hymn: No. 166 verses 1-3

Special by Eleanor Guntrum & Daughter, Asbury United
Methodist Church

VII The Word of Commitment

The Lesson: Luke 23:44-49
The Meditation: Pastor Chester Harzolf, Duncannon
Church of God

The Prayer

*The Hymn: No. 173 'Were You There'

The Benediction and Silent Prayer
Organ Postlude

*Congregation Please Stand

You are invited to remain for as many segments as your
time permits. Please feel free to leave during the
singing of a hymn, or at its end. Offering plates
have been placed near the doors; your gifts will support
the work of the Duncannon Council of Churches.

Lenten Meditation Duncannon 1973
The Fourth Word

MARK

Text: Mark 15:29-34, 33, "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which means, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"

In the execution of Jesus we find that He was silent from the sixth to the ninth hour and there was darkness over the whole land for this period of time. What the circumstances were, surrounding this darkness is anyone's guess. It was in all probability a manifestation that what was taking place was out of the ordinary, and so the weather was also unusual. To speculate whether it was an eclipse or just darkness is immaterial. ~~What is~~ It is almost as if the sun had to be hidden because of the horrible deed that was being perpetrated on that hill just outside of Jerusalem.

The silence of Jesus is also unexplainable. Perhaps He was involved in a quiet period of meditation with God and was praying. Perhaps He was silently bearing His pain and agony and awaiting the fate He surely knew must follow in a short period of time. Perhaps He wanted to remain silent so as to silence those who previously had been taunting him. Its possible He felt that by silence, the horror of what they were doing to an innocent man, would sink into their hearts and make them aware of their sinfulness.

But again, no one can answer why He was silent. The most educated guess would be that He was drifting in and out of an unconscious state as the agony of His physical torture kept increasing. He had now been on the cross for a considerable time, six hours, and the average time for death to overtake ~~was~~ a criminal to die by crucifixion was twelve hours. So in all likelihood He was about halfway there. ~~The nails through His hands and His feet, and His flesh tearing against them~~ His flesh must have been tearing where the nails had gone through, and the wind and the previous sun, had cause the skin to dry, and the blood had clotted allowing the flies

and gnats to alight upon His flesh. The blood inside His body was impeded in its natural flow and His heart and brain had probably swollen because of incomplete the ~~complete~~ flow of blood, so He would be reduced to pain with any movement whatever. So when he became semi-conscious of what was going on, again, cried out with His remaining strength, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Was this the cry of one who felt forsaken and completely cut off from the Father? Or was this the cry of one who felt He could no longer endure the pain and suffering and was not aware ~~that~~ of just what He was saying? Or was He merely repeating the words of an old and very familiar Psalm ^{Psalm 22} written by David in his hour of distress? It is possible that Jesus was using this psalm as a prayer to God, for it contains so many similarities to what Jesus was enduring ~~and~~ at this very moment in His life. ~~The psalm reads~~ If we look at the psalm and take out the passages that apply we can see this fourth word in perhaps another light.

It reads: "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from ~~helping me~~ helping me, from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; and by night but find no rest.

But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; 'He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!'

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

Yea dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet--I can count all my bones--- they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots."

Then the psalm goes on to start to sing the praises of God and how he will deliver the people. It ends with the words: Men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it."

Here then we can see that perhaps Jesus was not crying out for God

having forsaken him, but was merely reiterating what David said years before, and that was, "That even in the midst of death God was there."

But there is yet one other possibility to be considered.

We know that Jesus was God in the flesh, and we know that he was human in all things such as we. The only thing lacking in his human body was sin. ~~But all men in their~~ But Jesus was enduring upon that cross the sins of all mankind. He was suffering there for you and for me. He was suffering the shame, the pain and torture and the very stigma that all of sin entails. His suffering was a very real thing and was not just play acting as some would have us believe. And isn't it possible that in his complete humanness in this situation He was not above feeling lost and forsaken? Do not all men cry out in complete despair when they feel the total weight of the rejection that is caused by sin? Do not all of us at one time or another feel rejected and forlorn and forsaken. Do we not at times want to cry out and sometimes even do, "My God, why me?"

Thus we can see that Jesus was showing his very humanness in this situation. But this is not to imply that He felt totally rejected or forsaken, again this is only speculation. But whatever the case may have been, we know that Jesus rose above this situation and conquered it with His very life. So whether the cry of, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?", was a cry of complete desolation and a sense of abandonment in this experience, or whether it was a cry from His lips to show the bystanders that He was human even as they, all of this is really immaterial. What is more important is that Jesus at this moment became the victor over sin and evil. He accomplished the work that His Father sent Him to do.

Before He ever faced this hour, Jesus once said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself." Thus when he uttered this forlorn cry, all eyes and the attention of all must have centered upon Him. And even we, look in fascination and horror at

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)





Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.